



STATE PRISONS

**California Correction Center
High Desert State Prison**

California Correctional Center:

Response: None

Findings: The California Correctional Center facility was opened in 1963 eight miles northeast of Susanville. The facility employs approximately 1065 personnel and has an annual operating budget of approximately \$88 million dollars. The design capacity in the facility and its outlying camps is 1785 Level I through Level III inmates. The current count at the time of this report was approximately 4296 Level I through Level III inmates. The Primary mission of the California Correctional Center is to receive, house and train minimum custody inmates for placement in one of Northern California conservation camps. Currently there are 16 camps located throughout Northern California to provide strategically located fire protection / suppression crews. The California Department of Corrections (C.D.C) and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (C.D.F) jointly operate these Camps. This is one of the longest working relationships in Government to date.

To qualify for camps, inmates must be minimum risk, in good physical condition and have no history of violent crimes. The average sentence for inmates selected for camps is two years. At a typical conservation camp, from 60 to 120 inmates live in a dormitory setting with military style bunks and eat in a cafeteria style/dining hall. Within the compound there are workshops, garages and storage facilities to house fire response and vocational training equipment. Because working in a camp and on fires reduces the time to be served at a faster rate than in the general population, because inmates in camp have more freedoms, disciplinary

problems are minimized. Disciplinary infractions result in inmates being returned to the main CCC facility.

At the time of our tour of the California Correctional Center, during the 2003-2004 Grand Jury term, the vocational programs offered at CCC included air conditioning and refrigeration, auto body, auto mechanics, dry cleaning, electronics, masonry, sheet metal, laundry, mill and cabinet, and welding.

In addition to the vocational training offered, Academic training available to inmates include adult basic education, high school GED, pre-release, English as a second language, literacy programs, computer-assisted education, and the Bridging Program, which is new. The California Correctional Center under Warden Prosper's direction, has successfully implemented the Bridging Program for Level I through III inmates in their main facilities. This program enables general population inmates to access the educational program earlier and begin earning day- for- day credit until assigned to a traditional academic, vocational, or other work covered by the inmate work- incentive program. This program is working well at CCC and provides a model for other institutions around the State.

This years Grand Jury received NO complaints from inmates or staff. This should demonstrate to the taxpayers of this county that Warden Prosper is doing a good job running the California Correctional Center.

The media raises the issue of funds and overtime at this institution. Our investigation on that subject showed that these officers are supervising inmates who are fighting fires many in very remote locations around the State. They require to be under twenty- four- hour guard. Which in turn, helps to keep the public safe. The cost of this coverage, although appearing high to most in the public and media, provides a significant savings to the

taxpayer. It would cost taxpayers more to have officers driving around the state to relieve other officers in order to avoid paying overtime. The current system appears to be working fine.

Recommendation: That if by the time this report is issued, the Governor has not confirmed Warden Prosper, that confirmation be undertaken without delay.

That Warden Prosper should by memorandum, issue a thank you to the staff for a job well done. CCC is a well-run institution.

High Desert State Prison

Response required: None

Findings: The primary mission of High Desert State Prison is to provide for the confinement of general- population level- four inmates and medium security level -three inmates. The facilities at High Desert State Prison are made up of a 200-bed minimum support facility and a 600-bed reception center that processes inmates who are being remanded to the care of the Department of Corrections from the northern counties of the State of California. Also set to open this year is a new 100 bed security housing unit. This should relieve some of the administrative segregation overcrowding .

Construction began in 1993 and in September of 1995, High Desert State Prison received its first inmates. The prison currently has a design capacity of 2224 with an average daily population of between 4450-4500 inmates. The prison employs approximately 1273 personnel and has an annual operating budget of \$110 million dollars. On a given day, the prison averages approximately 320 personnel in Administrative Segregation, the highest level of incarceration at High Desert State Prison. Approximately 500 Inmates at High Desert State Prison are undergoing enhanced monitoring for the use of psychotropic medications, including 400 wheelchair- mobility impaired inmates.

High Desert State Prison, from its inception, has always been involved in community services. Its vocational programs have participated in constructing or refinishing many projects over the past seven years in support of Lassen County, Susanville, and other surrounding communities, local schools, fire departments, the local library and the Lassen County Fair.

Recipient agencies must be public tax- supported entities.

For the past four years, the number of incidents requiring the use of force have held steady at a level between 600 and 650 incidents a year. Given the inmate population and level of classification, this appears to be about average for a like -sized prison in the State. Staff assaults have also fallen for the fourth straight year. This is a direct reflection on how staff at High Desert State Prison handle themselves. They are very professional in the manner in which they deal with the inmates housed at High Desert State Prison. All staff should be commended for a job well done.

High desert State Prison is a well run institution that has improved significantly as the prison has gained more experienced staff and developed and improved procedures specific to the mission at High Dessert State Prison. The supervision from Warden Runnels on down have exhibited a caring attitude and fair policy of dealing with the inmates at High Desert State Prison, which was evident throughout our tour.

High Dessert State Prison is well run, and this is becoming an even more difficult task each year given the fact the Department of Corrections is deficit funding its prisons at a rate of 4.9% of it's overall budget. This has gone on for the past several years and shows no sign of changing any time soon. However the court mandated cases dealing with Medical issues are still on the rise, with little monies available. The legislature needs to understand that every time a judge grants a case against the Department of Corrections to provide services the Department of Finance doesn't provide monies to accomplish the task. As a result, all the institutions are asked to do more and more each year without being given the funding to make it work.

Within the first three years of activation of High Desert State Prison it became clear that more segregated housing would be needed to allow this institution to be operated safely and securely. Warden Runnels and other wardens around the State started to lobby the Department of Correction for help in alleviating this problem. Their hard work paid off with the use of Inmate Day Labor(I.D.L) inmates. These inmates have necessary skills which were used to construct the administrative segregation unit.

Approximately eighty inmates were used to accomplish this task. A portion of the I.D.L program is designed to assist inmates in learning and improving their skills, ultimately increasing their opportunity for employment upon parole. Inmates participating in the I.D.L program worked in masonry, cement finishing, welding, iron working, carpentry, electric and plumbing.

The structure of the new ASU is designed to accommodate a minimum of one hundred inmates with four of the one hundred cells designated for inmates with disabilities (ADA standards). It is estimated that upon activation it will be at one hundred fifty percent of its designed capacity. This projection is based on the numbers provided to us by High Desert staff .The structure itself is rectangular in shape with inmates cells off of straight hallways. The design also includes the construction of twenty exercise yards that will facilitate the safe programming of the exercise periods.

The construction of the Administrative Segregation unit began in October of 2001 with a budget of 7.9 million dollars. The cost savings for utilizing inmate day labor (I.D.L) crews are estimated to be approximately 5 million dollars, making this project fiscally sound for the Taxpayers of the

State of California.

Recommendation: Warden Runnels should be commended for a job well done. The staff at High Desert State Prison, from the cook to the Correctional Officers and the administrators, all deserve a thank you from the citizens of Lassen County for a Job well done.

Warden Runnels should communicate to all his staff via memorandum that all his Staff have done a good job in running High Desert State Prison again this year.